

Falk-Bloch Mercantile Co.  
100 North Eighth Street  
Boise  
Ada County  
Idaho

HABS No. ID-18

HABS,  
ID.  
1 - BOISE,  
3 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ID-18

## FALK-BLOCH MERCANTILE CO.

Location: Northeast corner, Eighth and Main Streets (100 North Eighth Street), Boise, Ada County, Idaho. USGS Boise North Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.564360.4829265.

Present Owner: Boise Redevelopment Agency  
711 ½ Bannock Street  
P.O. Box 987  
Boise, Idaho 83701

Present Occupant and Use: Present use is commercial, scheduled to be demolished.

Significance: At one time the Falk-Bloch Mercantile Company's building was called the big brick "emporium". Occupying a corner of the historic principal intersection of downtown Boise, its original facade has unfortunately since been covered over, completely hiding its original architectural merit.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Date of construction: 1896
2. Architects: McCaw & Martin of Portland, Oregon.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Chain of title is complete, reference is Office of Ada County Clerk-Recorder, Records Department.
  - 1871 Warranty Deed November 21, 1871. Recorded November 22, 1871 in Book 4 Pages 448-449.  
Theodore Wollstein  
to  
David Falk & Nathan Falk
  - 1875 Quitclaim Deed June 22, 1875. Recorded July 27, 1875 in Book 6 Pages 495-496.  
Edward Bishop  
to  
William H. Nye

- 1878      Warranty Deed June 14, 1878. Recorded February 8, 1879  
          in Book 8 Page 63.  
D. Falk & Brother (David & Nathan Falk)  
          to  
          Schwabacher & Co. (Abe, Sigismun, Louis Schwabacher and L.M.  
          and Fred Epstein)
- 1881      Deed August 31, 1881. Recorded September 29, 1881  
          in Book 9 Page 1.  
          Louis & Bella Schwabacher  
          to  
          Lewis M. Schwabacher and Fredrick Epstein
- 1886      Warranty Deed August 28, 1886. Recorded August 30, 1886  
          in Book 11 Page 722.  
          William H. and Caroline S. Nye  
          to  
          John B. Broadbent
- 1890      Warranty Deed September 7, 1890. Recorded September 21, 1890  
          in Book 15 Page 301.  
          Fred & Nina Epstein  
          to  
          Leonard Logan
- 1890      Warranty Deed May 2, 1890. Recorded May 13, 1890  
          in Book 15 Page 497.  
          Leonard and Grace G. Logan  
          to  
          Thomas E. Logan
- 1895      Bargain and Sale Deed April 10, 1895. Recorded April 12, 1895  
          in Book 29 Page 238.  
          Nathan Falk  
          to  
          Sigmund Falk
- 1895      Quitclaim Deed April 10, 1895. Recorded April 12, 1895  
          in Book 29 Page 241.  
          David Falk  
          to  
          Sigmund and Nathan Falk

- 1895      Warranty Deed April 20, 1895. Recorded May 1, 1895  
in Book 29 Page 271.  
Joseph R. and Nellie V. DeLamar  
to  
A. W. Butts
- 1895      Warranty Deed August 3, 1895. Recorded August 5, 1895  
in Book 29 Page 508.  
Alfred N. Butts  
to  
James E. Putnam and William E. Child
- 1900      Warranty Deed January 12, 1900. Recorded January 24, 1900  
in Book 38 Page 139.  
James E. Putman and William E. Child  
to  
James A. Pinney
- 1904      Warranty Deed November 5, 1904. No. 5324 recorded November 14, 1904  
in Book 52 Page 180.  
Leo J. Falk  
to  
John B. Broadbent
- 1905      Mayor's Deed February 1, 1905. No. 6260 recorded February 1, 1905  
in Book 53, Page 275.  
James H. Hawley, Mayor & Trustee  
to  
Leo J. Falk
- 1905      Warranty Deed October 2, 1905. No. 8561 recorded October 2, 1905  
in Book 58 Page 41.  
Madison C. Smith  
to  
John B. Broadbent
- 1908      Decree of Distribution July 22, 1908. No. 20551 recorded July  
27, 1908 in Book 74 Page 373.  
Estate of Nathan Falk  
to  
Rosa Falk, Et al
- 1908      Warranty Deed September 8, 1908. No. 20894 recorded September  
9, 1908 in Book 74 Page 456.  
Harry Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.

- 1908      Warranty Deed September 3, 1908. No. 20895 Recorded September 9, 1908 in Book 74 Page 459.  
Rosa Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Warranty Deed September 8, 1908. No. 20896 recorded September 9, 1908 in Book 74 Page 462.  
Leo J. Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Warranty Deed September 3, 1908. No. 20897 recorded September 9, 1908 in Book 74, Page 465.  
Bella Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Warranty Deed September 8, 1908. No. 20898 recorded September 9, 1908 in Book 74 Page 468.  
Ralph Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Warranty Deed September 3, 1908. No. 20899 recorded September 9, 1908 in Book 74 Page 471.  
Samuel Rothchild and Anne Falk Rothchild  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Order Confirming Sale of Real Estate September 16, 1908. No. 20944 recorded September 16, 1908 in Book 74 Page 477  
Theodore Falk, a minor, by Rosa Falk, guardian  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1908      Guardian's Deed September 17, 1908. No. 20988 recorded September 19, 1908 in Book 74 Page 483.  
Theodore Falk, a minor, by Rosa Falk, guardian  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1910      Guardian's Deed July 7, 1910. No. 31182 recorded July 7, 1910 in Book 79 Pages 379, 380 and 381.  
Rosa Falk, guardian  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1910      Warranty Deed November 1, 1910. No. 32950 recorded November 2, 1910 in Book 79 Pages 596 and 597.  
Sigmund Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.

- 1910 Quitclaim Deed November 1, 1910. No. 32951 recorded November 2, 1910.  
Sigmund Falk  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.
- 1923 Decree of Settlement and Distribution December 18, 1923.  
No. 109126 recorded January 7, 1924 in Book 167 Pages 31 - 34  
Estate of John B. Broadbent  
to  
Emma Broadbent, Et al
- 1923 Warranty Deed December 18, 1923. No. 109128 recorded January 7, 1924 in Book 167 Pages 117 - 119.  
Emma Broadbent, Et al  
to  
Lloyd M. Willis, Joseph Holland and Franklin B. Vernoy as trustees
- 1927 Warranty Deed February 11, 1927. No. 125152 recorded April 1, 1927 in Book 178 Pages 235 and 236.  
Lloyd M. Willis, Joseph Holland and Franklin B. Vernoy as trustees  
to  
Leo J. Falk
- 1927 Mayor's Deed March 23, 1927. No. 125153 recorded April 1, 1927.  
Book 178 Pages 237 and 238.  
Ern C. Eagleson, Mayor and Trustee  
to  
Leo J. Falk
- 1927 Warranty Deed June 17, 1927. No. 126232 recorded June 20, 1927  
in Book 178 Pages 439 - 442  
The Falk Mercantile Co., Ltd.  
to  
The Falk Mercantile Realty and Holding Co.
- 1927 Warranty Deed June 17, 1927. No. 126231 recorded June 20, 1927  
in Book 179 Page 145.  
Leo J. and Helen F. Falk (h & w)  
to  
The Falk Mercantile Realty and Holding Co.
- 1945 Warranty Deed February 19, 1945. No. 235170 recorded April 6, 1945 in Book 283 Pages 444 and 445.  
Howe B. Willis, Florence H. Farnsworth and Franklin B. Vernoy, Trustees  
to  
Falk Mercantile Realty & Holding Company

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1945 Quitclaim Deed April 10, 1945. No. 240337 recorded October 5, 1945 in Book 288 Page 121  
Boise City  
to  
Falk Mercantile Realty and Holding Co.

1871 Deed March 24, 1871. No. 280209 recorded October 4, 1948  
Charles Himrod, Mayor, as Trustee  
to  
John Krall

1948 Quitclaim Deed October 5, 1948. No. 282732 recorded December 27, 1948, in Book 331 Page 416.  
Falk Mercantile Realty and Holding Co.  
to  
Falk Mercantile Co., Ltd.

1949 Quitclaim Deed January 29, 1949. No. 283605 recorded January 31, 1949.  
Falk Mercantile Co., Ltd.  
to  
Falk Mercantile Realty and Holding Co.

1952 Corporation Warranty Deed June 1, 1952. No. 332832 recorded June 19, 1952.  
Falk Mercantile Co., Ltd.  
to  
Falk Realty Co.

1964 Quitclaim Deed August 7, 1964. No. 590750 recorded August 7, 1964.  
Eugene Shellworth, Mayor, as trustee  
to  
Estate of Nathan Falk "Limited"

1964 Quitclaim Deed No. 590751 recorded August 7, 1964.  
E. W. Shellworth, Mayor, as trustee  
to  
Falk Realty Co.

1976 Final Order of Judgment and Condemnation February 27, 1976. No. 7607259 recorded February 27, 1976.  
Boise Redevelopment Agency vs Oppenheimer Companies, Inc., successor to Oppenheimer - Falk Realty Co. and Estate of Nathan Falk, Ltd.

4. Original plans and construction:

The original construction drawings are available to the public at the office of Hummel, Jones, Miller and Hunsucker, 132<sup>4</sup> West Idaho Street, Boise, Idaho.

5. Alterations and additions:

Although this structure was expanded, remodeled and altered, dates and names of the architects involved were not found in listed sources. The 1896 structure extended north along Eighth Street 122' to the alley, and was three bays wide on the Main Street frontage. It was a three story building with the street level used for retailing, while the upper two floors were leased to other tenants. As the Falk's business grew, the upper floors were taken over for retailing space, and two subsequent additions were built along Main Street to the east. In 1959 the entire facade was covered by cast stone slabs which have completely changed the appearance of the original building. Some of the old brick and stone still lies underneath. About 1940 the grocery department and soda fountain which had occupied the northern-most street level section next to the alley were discontinued and the area used for further expansion.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Falk brothers were influential to the city of Boise. David Falk was a leader of a Jewish community in Boise. He was president of the congregation when temple Beth Israel was built in 1895. Nathan Falk, brother of David, was president of Falk-Bloch Mercantile Co. when it first started. Leo J. Falk, son of Nathan later president was one of the organizers of the Boise Commercial Club (predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce) and its president for 1910 and 1911.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory, 1972.  
Determination of eligibility for the National Register.  
(Depository for these records: Idaho State Historical Society, 610 North Julia Davis Drive, Boise, Idaho 83702.



Jane Falk Oppenheimer, daughter of Leo J. Falk, listed above under "Events and Persons,"  
1320 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, Idaho. Interviewed May 21, 1980.  
"Urban Conservation and Adaptive Re-Use Analysis" prepared for Boise Redevelopment Agency and on file in its offices. Gage Davis and Associates, Boulder, Colorado, September, 1978.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Historic Boise, An Introduction to the Architecture of Boise, Idaho 1863 - 1938.  
Text by Arthur A. Hart. Published by Boise City Historic Preservation Commission, 1979, as a part of the Boise City Historic Preservation Plan. Library of Congress Card No.79-91082.

History of Idaho, Volume 2 of three volumes, S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1920 (p. 26).

c. Sources not yet investigated:

Files of the Idaho Daily Statesman newspaper, published in Boise since 1864, are available on microfilm in the Library and Archives of the Idaho State Historical Society, located in the Idaho State Library, 325 West State Street, Boise, Idaho.

Files of the Evening Capital News are similarly available from 1899 on.

Prepared by Patricia L. Rowse  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
July 1980

from survey form compiled by  
C. Wayne Hunsucker AIA  
Boise, Idaho  
May 1980

## PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Exterior:

The Falk's ID Department Store is a three story plus basement corner building. None of the original south and west windows exist on exterior. They have been covered by a facade of cast stone slabs. First floor store front windows have been modernized. Original south and west walls are stone and brick masonry but were also covered in 1959 by the stone facade. (See historic view ca. 1910). The overall dimensions make a rectangular shape 122' x 166'.

### B. Interior:

Open retail space on all floors with peripheral storage and dressing rooms on north and east walls. One original staircase remains at northeast corner of building (See floor plans).

### C. General Setting:

Located at northeast corner of Main and Eighth Streets.

## PART III SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

USGA Map with building identified.

Prepared by Patricia L. Rowse  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
July 1980

from survey form compiled by  
C. Wayne Hunsucker AIA  
Boise, Idaho  
May 1980

## PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

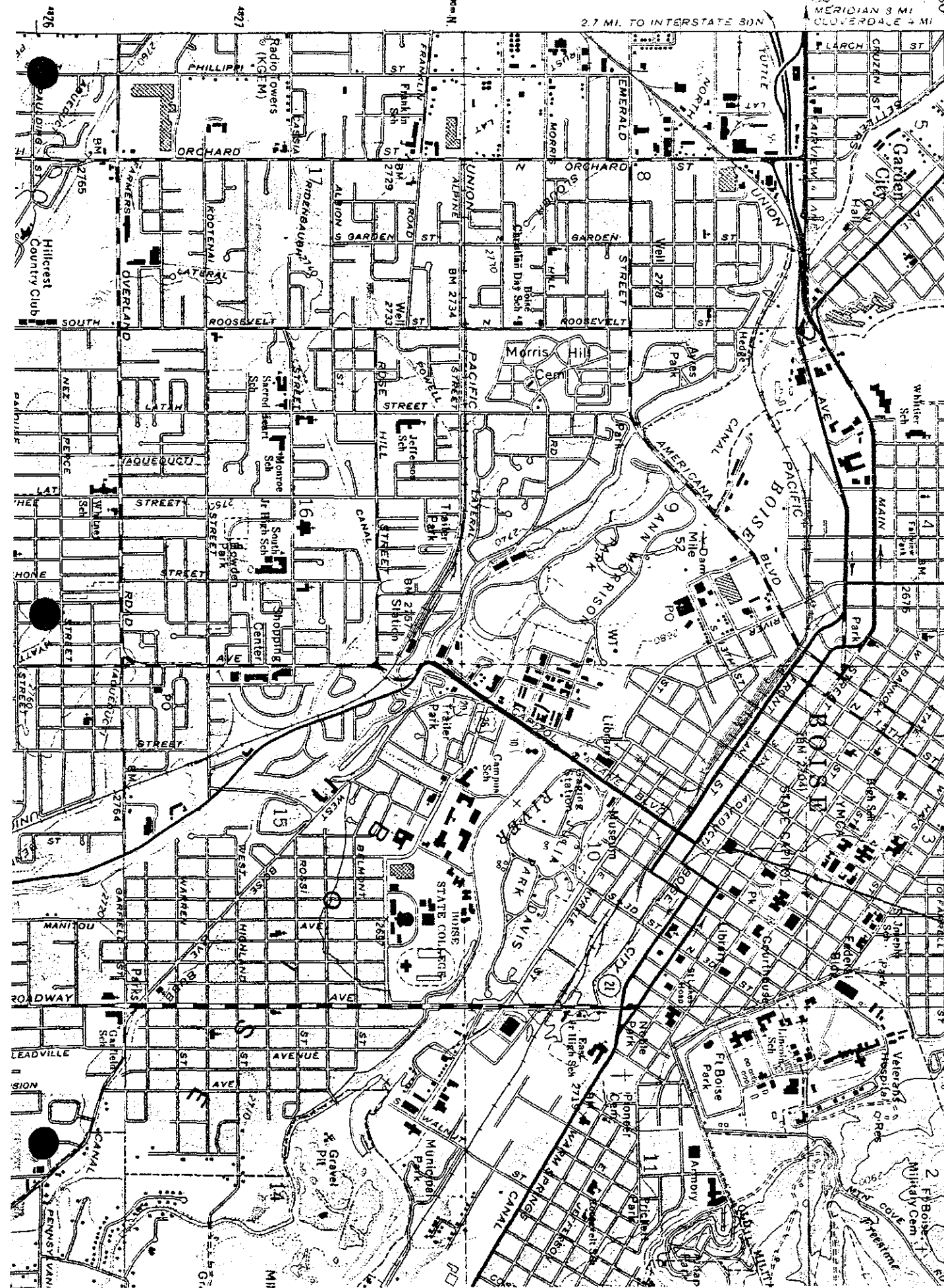
This project was undertaken by the Boise Redevelopment Agency in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to mitigate the adverse effect of the regional retail center in Boise Idaho. John A. Burns, AIA and Emily J. Harris were the HABS project coordinators.

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dinators. The written data was prepared in the HABS office by Patricia Rowse in July 1980 from the survey form compiled by C. Wayne Hunsucker, AIA, Boise, Idaho. Photographs were taken by Duane Garrett in March 1980.

FALK'S STORE BUILDING



An Addendum to  
Falk-Bloch Mercantile Co.  
100 North Eighth Street  
Boise  
Ada County  
Idaho

HABS No. ID-18

HABS  
ID,  
1-BOISE,  
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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ID,  
1-BOISE,  
3-  
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FALK-BLOCH MERCANTILE CO.

Addendum to 11 pages previously transmitted to the  
Library of Congress

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Architects:

The original 1896 building with its three bays facing Main Street was designed by McCaw and Martin of Portland, Oregon. The firm was established in 1883 as MaCaw and Burton but changed to McCaw and Wickersham in 1884. Architect Martin became a partner in the 1890s and left the firm during 1897. The firm of McCaw and Martin is most noted for Portland's first Presbyterian Church in a "high Victorian Gothic" style, the castellated National Guard armory and the Dekum Building and New Market Annex--both in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

As the Falk-Bloch Mercantile Co. also operated in Portland in its early years it is assumed that this relationship led to the selection of a Portland architect to design what was to be Boise's largest commercial building in 1896.

In 1902 the Boise architectural firm of J.E. Tourtellotte and Co. moved to third floor offices within the Falk Building. The firm, which later became Tourtellotte and Hummel, designed similarly styled additions for the building in 1905 and 1927 as well as numerous interior and exterior remodeling for the structure up through the 1960s.

J.E. Tourtellotte started his architectural practice in

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Boise in 1896 and was joined by Charles Hummel in 1900. Mr. Hummel became a partner in 1910. Tourtellotte and Hummel became the leading architectural firm in Southwest Idaho with their most prominent building being the Idaho State Capitol built between 1905 and 1919.

The firm remains today under the name Hummel, La Marche & Hunsucker. Published in 1987, the book, TOURTELLOTTE & HUMMEL OF IDAHO: THE STANDARD PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE, documents the life and works of this prominent Idaho firm.

#### Alterations and Additions:

Built for the Falk-Bloch Mercantile Co. in 1896, the three-story plus basement brick and stone building was the largest commercial enterprise in Boise City. The structure extended north along Eighth Street 122' to the alley with a frontage on Main Street of 60'9" consisting of three bays. The architect was McCaw and Martin of Portland, the contractor was William Houtz, and the stone cutting was done by R.E. Feguson.

In 1902 Mr. Bloch was bought out by the Falk family and the business became the Falk Mercantile Co. Ltd. Increased business compelled the owners to expand and remodel. Over the years the building's exterior and interior underwent numerous alterations. Two subsequent additions were constructed along Main Street and an adjacent building was turned into an annex.

By 1905 the quarters had become too small and a three-story addition conforming in architectural design with the Falk block proper was erected. The addition's

frontage, which had one bay, was 18'7" wide and occupied the former site of the Pioneer Book Store owned by James A. Pinney. The architect was J.E. Tourtellotte and Co. who were officed on the third floor of the Falk Building at the time.

Over time the building's storefront underwent major changes with entrances being relocated and more display windows built. Originally, the 1896 building had a sandstone arched entrance to the offices and a grocery entrance on Eighth Street as well as a corner entrance

and one on Main Street. By the 1920s additional store windows had been expanded along Eighth Street, including new clerestory windows, and entrances had been relocated. Those entrances had marquees with glass pendants. In the early 1920s the Falk Mercantile Co. expanded into the second and third floors which had formerly served as 42 offices.

By 1927 expanding business led to a second addition along Main Street by the Falk owners. Designed by architects Tourtellotte and Hummel and constructed by Frank Rathman, the three-story building was similar to the original 1896 building. The Main Street frontage was 50' and had three bays.

In 1953 the second and third floors of the adjacent rooming house building were made into an annex for the Falk Mercantile Co. New openings were made connecting these floors to the Falk Building. The first floor with its two retail spaces remained separate. The three-story, three-bay building had been built in 1910 for John Broadbent. The brick building's contractor was W.A. White.



In 1957 the exterior of the original building and its two additions were remodeled and modernized. The exterior walls on Main Street and Eighth Street were covered with porcelanized steel panels from above the new first floor show windows to the roof. Original bay windows on Eighth Street and portions of the parapet were removed. These changes and the anchoring of new sheathing disfigured the building and damaged its original sandstone facade. A new aluminum marquee extending eight feet out over the sidewalk was constructed around the building on both Main and Eighth streets. The show windows were rebuilt and framed with precast terrazzo panels. A new aluminum and glass entrance opened on both the Eighth and Main street sides. The architect was Hummel, Hummel and Jones.

Occupants and Owners:

Owned by David, Sigmund, and Nathan Falk along with business associate Mr. Bloch, the 1896 commercial building was occupied for ninety-five years by the retail business best known as the Falk Mercantile Co.

The mercantile business was first established in the Emmett area in 1868 and later became Boise's longest continuously run general merchandise business. The Falk name disappeared from the Idaho retail scene in July of 1986.

The immense Boise store opened on March 15, 1897, occupying the entire first floor and basement. Its various departments included dry goods, women's apparel, shoes, men's clothing, home furnishings, carpets, housewares and a separate grocery department covering a

floor space of 15,128 square feet.

Originally, the second and third floors contained forty-two offices leased by business tenants. Professionals listed in the Polk's Directories included a physician, dentist, civil engineers, insurance agency, and architect. J.E. Tourtellotte and Co., the architect for the 1906 and 1927 additions to the building, had an office on the third floor from 1902 through 1906. By 1920 the business offices were replaced as the Falk Mercantile Co. Ltd. expanded into the second and third floors.

Leo J. Falk, son of Nathan, oversaw the 1927 addition which further expanded the store. In 1939 the Falk Mercantile Co. became agents for Sears Roebuck & Co. which was located in the basement. The grocery department which had its own entrance on Eighth Street remained through the 1940s.

In 1953 the business was sold to the Idaho Department Store chain and renamed Falks Idaho Department Store.

In 1953 the business expanded into the second and third floors of the adjacent three-story brick building. Known as the Falks Annex, this building was originally owned by capitalist John Broadbent and built by contractor W.A. White in 1910. The building's second and third floor tenant was the Starling Hotel and over the next forty years it served as furnished rooms with names such as the Boise Rooms, Hollywood Hotel, and Del Rio Hotel. The first floor had two shop spaces which remain today. Retail tenants over the years included the Banquet Saloon, Banquet Market, Cooper & Cooper Shoe Repairs, Red Cross Pharmacy, and the Merino Cigar Store.

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In its later years the shops included a restaurant and beauty salon.

By 1966 the Falk's Idaho Department Store was sold to Interco Inc. which continued to expand the chain to twenty stores in the northwest. The last Idaho outlets closed in 1986.

The downtown Boise store was purchased in 1978 by the Boise Redevelopment Agency with the store closing in 1982. The building's last tenant was the Friends of Capitol City, a non-profit group offering personalized engraved bricks for The Grove, a new downtown park.

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Sources of Information:

Bibliography:

Files of original construction drawings of Falk Building and additions, located at the office of Hummel, La Marche and Hunsucker Architects, Boise, Idaho.

Peggy Haines, Manuscripts Librarian, Oregon Historical Society. 1230 S.W. Park Ave. Portland, Oregon. Correspondence November 13, 1987.

Published Sources:

Idaho Daily Statesman (Boise), March 14, 1897, p.2, c.1-3; March 15, 1898, p. 6 c.3-6; January 1, 1904, p.24, c.1-6; August 2, 1904, p.5, c.5; May 25, 1910, p.7, c.1; May 30, 1910, p.10, c.1-2; September 29, 1957, p.6, c.1-4.

Insurance Map of Boise, Ada County, Idaho. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1893, 1903, 1912, 1940, and 1947.

Polk's Boise City and Ada County Directory, 1898-1950. Salt Lake City, Utah, 1898-1950.

Wright, Patricia and Lisa B. Reitzes. Tourtellotte & Hummel of Idaho: The Standard Practice of Architecture. Utah State University Press, 1987.

Prepared by John L. Bertram  
Planmakers, Boise, Idaho  
November 1987

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Falk Building, Additions and Annex

